

GOOD HUMOR

You humor Jim, the mechanic, because he's bigger than you and that's the only way you can survive his dumbness.

You pump the gas and make the change and change the tires and he works on the engines. You never actually feel superior.

One night, on the graveyard shift, he whines about his girlfriend and punches you in the stomach despite your good humor.

Once you pumped gas for two weeks with a broken pinky and never realized it was broken. It continued to swell, so you finally went to the bone specialist and in mid-sentence, he rebroke it.

You'll always hate that bone specialist.

UP THE TOMATOES

You are in charge of the toy department, the small appliances, carpeting and housewares -- virtually one third of the basement space at the J.C. Penney store. You run the whole works on a part-time hourly wage, and you also keep the wolves at bay: the roving pack of lean and hungry assistant managers whose job it is to get underfoot, like snails, and bring misery and chaos where formerly existed sweetness and light.

This one particularly overbright assistant manager yells at you from next to your cash register one night. You are 50 yards across the floor helping a customer to decide between harvest gold and avocado green highlights for a toaster-broiler oven (it is pre-microwave 1971). You can't believe this nurd-brain

is actually yelling -- a dozen customers stand in the aisles separating you, and he is obviously pissed that you have left your cash register unguarded when he also knows

for a fact that no one could open it with less than a sledge hammer since you have the key in your pocket. So you wave, not inclined

to yell back, only this infuriates him more and he yells: Get your ass over here now, or you're through! You excuse yourself rather abruptly. You yell. UP THE TOMATOES!! and head for him -- no matter how useless and messy

the effort may be, not every snail on the path is stepped upon accidentally.

TYPEWRITER CITY

A new shipment of Royals comes in just as Ron, the chubby little owner of TC, gets on the phone in another one of his real estate deals. So you go out back and try to think of new ways to stack the bastards cause your boss is a pennypincher on a genetic scale and orders wholesale

volumes of typewriters, 100 at a time, in order to save a few bucks, and he wants you to cram them into a 50 typewriter space in the storeroom. You get the ladder and begin piling them 10 high when Jack the salesman returns with coffee and donuts.

Naturally he doesn't offer to help, but as you lug the 10th case by his steaming coffee and glazy donuts, Ron's voice overtakes you both: "Jesus Christ, not a cent over \$250,000," he yells into the phone. "It's only 4 units and I've got to build garages...." Then he spots Jack and lets

fly in our direction: "Where's my 30¢ change, Jack?" You can't believe your eyes as Jack forks over the 30¢ a little sheepishly. When you finish -- ten stacks, ten high -- you experience a workingman's pride. Too bad it doesn't compound interest. However, it does keep you alive. You only wish that

just for once it could be, instead of Pride, one of the other Deadly Sins -- say, the keen cutting edge of 30¢ in change.